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Training Staff Officers to the Level of Modern Requirements

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The revolution in military affairs has introduced fundamental changes not only into the nature and methods of combat actions, but also into literally all areas of their preparation, organization, and conduct. In particular, there have been changes in the conditions, methods, volume, and content of the work of commanders, staffs, and chiefs of the branch arms and special troops and services, both in preparing an operation and while it is in progress. Especially high demands have begun to be made on the officers of the operations directorates and departments (sections) who are the key officers in the staffs during the planning of an operation and the providing of troop control in the course of combat actions.

At the present time, on the one hand the volume and variety of the work of operations officers has been sharply increased, while on the other hand the amount of time for accomplishing the responsible and complex tasks they carry out has been greatly reduced. Also, it must be kept in mind that during the last ten years, as a result of table of organization changes, the personnel of the staffs has been somewhat reduced, including that of the operations organs, especially at the front level.

Unquestionably, the basic solution to a certain portion of this problem is the transition to the integrated automation of troop control. However, this is a complex matter and cannot be accomplished within the next three to four years. The troops and, consequently, the staffs are now already required to be in a state of constant combat readiness. This means that we must solve this problem now without waiting for integrated automated control systems to be fully introduced into the work of the staffs. To do this, it is essential that staff officers achieve a level of training which would meet modern requirements.

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In addition to having a deep understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory and of the principles of military

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science, a staff operations officer must have a sound knowledge of the actual organization and capabilities of his own troops and those of the enemy and of the methods and procedures for the tactical and operational employment of combat equipment and troops under any situational conditions. While during the last war a staff officer had to have a knowledge of and be able to organize the employment of conventional weapons alone, he must now, in addition, fully master the combat characteristics and capabilities of nuclear weapons, missiles and other equipment of the latest type which are in service. At the same time he must be able to quickly collect and prepare all the necessary data and calculations for the commander to make his decision; he must know and understand the situation and report it accurately; and he must skilfully draw up combat documents and transmit tasks to the troops in time. During the combat and operational training of the troops and staffs, he must be able to work out scientific papers, reports and lectures, as well as competently develop group training sessions, troop exercises and war games and make critiques of them. His work requires him to make proper use of available means of mechanization and automation and to be adequately prepared to master the technical means which the troops will receive in the near future. Moreover, an operations officer must be able to carry out this entire volume of work at the very least at the level of the large unit or formation in which he is working, i.e., the assistant chief of the operations section of a division -- for the division, the officers of the operations department of an army -- for the army, etc.

How are these cadres being trained at the present time? It would seem that the answer could be found immediately: they are being trained in the Military Academy i/n M. V. Frunze, in the command faculty of the Military Academy of Armored Troops i/n R. Ya. Malinovskiy, and in the Military Academy of the General Staff. Undoubtedly, many of the officers who have graduated from these academies are successfully coping with the tasks of operations officers. However, the majority of graduates enter into command positions and join the staffs of large formations. These higher military educational institutions do not train officers specially for staff work. Consequently, few of their graduates are working as operations officers. For example, the operations sections of divisions (brigades) are manned mainly by officers who have graduated from military schools where they were unable to comprehensively study the staff work either of a

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division or of a regiment. There are usually no more than two or three officers in these sections who have had a higher military education: the section chief and his deputy, and in some staffs, the senior assistant to the chief of the operations section. Also, in the operations department of an army staff, one very frequently encounters officers who have not studied an army operation and, therefore, cannot accurately comprehend the level of the work of the operations department of an army staff. Although these officers undoubtedly acquire a certain amount of knowledge and experience while working in the staff, they would do so much more quickly and easily if they had received the necessary prior training related to the position they occupy in special courses and in higher military educational institutions. The operations directorate of the military district is manned by officers who have had a higher military education. The overwhelming majority of them have graduated from the Military Academy i/n M. V. Frunze or the command faculty of the Military Academy of Armored Troops. However, as we know, neither a front operation nor the work of an operations directorate or front staff is studied there.

To sum up, it turns out that the officers of the key sections, departments, and directorates are trained, essentially, only within the system of command training, in staff exercises, war games, and training exercises. Certainly, they must be given due credit for their capabilities and diligence. However, although the majority of them are able to cope with their duties and a great deal of time and effort is spent in training them, the level of their training is nevertheless far below that needed by a staff operations officer under present-day conditions. Therefore, with each year the problem of manning the operations sections, departments, and directorates of staffs becomes increasingly acute.

In the Baltic Military District an attempt was made to train operations officers in periodic training courses. These courses were given in the military district headquarters in 1963 and in the army staff in 1966. The chiefs of the operations sections of divisions were enrolled in them. However, experience showed that this measure was clearly inadequate. More basic measures are needed to solve such an important problem.

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What then, are the possible ways of solving this problem? In our opinion, three basic measures must be taken at the ground forces level. First, in the near future there must be a comprehensive examination of the problem of training staff operations officers in the higher military educational institutions.

In October 1967, the problems involved in training officers for a command-staff specialty were discussed at the eighth scientific methods conference at the Military Academy i/n M. V. Frunze. Much attention was given to the overall organization and system of their training, to determining the volume of training materials and working out training programs, to organizing the training process, and also to improving the training materiel resources. A proposal was introduced to set up a special organ to study the problems involved in training officers and to work out specific recommendations for refining the existing training practices in the higher military educational institutions with a view toward raising the professional skills of combined-arms officers specializing in command-staff work. However, this concerns the future. In the meantime, it is advisable to set up yearly training courses for operations officers for the next three to four years. These courses can be set up at the Military Academy i/n M. V. Frunze for officers who, after graduating from school and working for three to four years in the troops, are moved up to work in the staff of a regiment, division, and army. The main part of the training program for these officers should be the study of the work of the deputy chief and chief of staff of a regiment and of the officers of a division operations section and an army operations department, and the improvement of their skills in carrying out their functional duties both in peacetime and in wartime.

Training courses for the officers of operations directorates of the military districts can be set up at the Military Academy of the General Staff. It is advisable to send to these courses officers who have graduated from the Military Academy i/n M. V. Frunze or the command faculty of the Military Academy of Armored Troops and have spent five to six years working in the troops. Their training program should focus primarily on studying problems of control during a front operation, organizing work in the staff and operations directorate of the front, and also on improving skills in carrying out the functional duties of the

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officers of the operations directorate of staffs both in peacetime and in wartime.

Second, the compulsory rotation of the tours of duty of officers and generals in staff and command positions must be instituted. It is advisable to assign officers who have commanded battalions for a specified period of time to work in the operations section of a division staff and the operations department of an army staff and to assign officers who have commanded regiments to work in the operations directorate of a military district. In turn, division and army operations officers should be assigned to the positions of regiment deputy commanders and commanders, and officers of the military district operations directorate should be assigned to the appropriate division positions. Experience shows that rotating officers' tours of duty in this manner produces good results.

Third, the relative standing of the authorized ranks of staff officers should be clarified beginning with the deputy chief of staff of a regiment and including the officers of the operations directorate of a military district in order to simplify the selection of officers from the appropriate command positions to man the operations sections, departments, and directorates. Authorized ranks should give officers the incentive to serve in this responsible and very important field of work. This is necessary because the majority of the authorized ranks for operations officers in the staffs of divisions and armies are captain and major, and consequently officers at the battalion and regiment command level consider these positions profitless for themselves. As a result, we have been compelled to assign to these positions officers of company commander level, who have the equivalent of a military school education. An analogous situation can be observed in the operations directorate of the military district staff where one very rarely encounters a former commander or chief of staff of a regiment in the position of an operations officer or even of a department chief.

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In addition to these three basic measures which, in our opinion, should be carried out at the ground forces level, there should be no reduction in the training of operations officers in the staffs of formations and large units. Holding courses and training sessions regularly makes it possible to increase the

knowledge and improve the work skills of staff officers and to give them a unity of views on new aspects of staff service. Courses can be held during the winter and summer training periods. Those held in the staff of a military district or army would be for the chiefs of staff of regiments and officers of division operations sections and army operations departments and would last seven to ten days; those held in the staff of a division would be for chiefs of staff of battalions and deputy chiefs of staff of regiments and would last five to seven days.

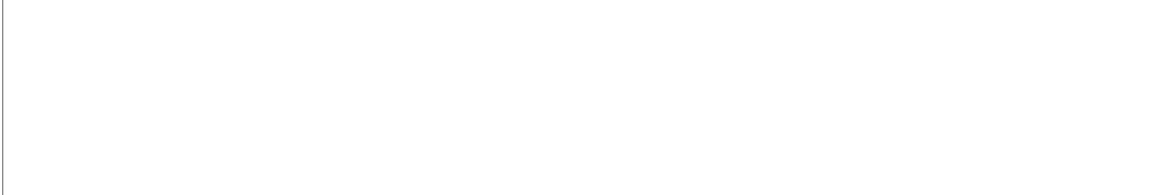
In addition, their training should be further improved during all group training sessions and especially during individual and joint staff training sessions.

It is advisable that during the individual staff training sessions the officers concentrate mainly on studying and working out their functional duties in practice, and that during joint staff training sessions they concentrate on organizing the teamwork of the sections (departments), services, and of the staff as a whole.

It is advisable that staff training exercises for officers at the battalion and regiment level be conducted once or twice a month, and that exercises for officers from the staffs of large units and formations be conducted two to three times per training period (in the winter and in the summer training periods) and last two to three days.

Thus, if the training of the operations officers of staffs is to meet the level of modern requirements, it is necessary that an entire system of measures be carried out in the near future both at the ground forces level and directly within the combined-arms formations and large units.

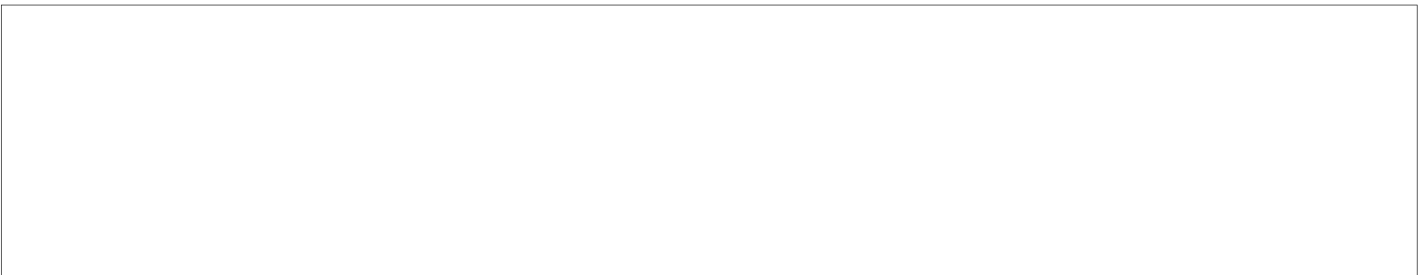
It is also very important that methods handbooks and articles be published describing the content, procedures and methods of the work of operations officers. These handbooks would enable the officers to master their functional duties more quickly. The prompt implementation of all the above measures



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would make it possible to sharply raise the quality of the training and work efficiency of the officers from the key sections, departments, and directorates, and consequently increase the combat readiness of the combined-arms staffs as the main organs of troop control.



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